

Torah Reading Gen. 32:4 to 33:20 (Parshat VaYishlach)
with recordings using the cantillation system from 'Chanting the Hebrew Bible' by Joshua Jacobson
English version with tropes November 27, 2020

Jacob's meeting with Esau

32:4 Then sent Jacob some messengers [ahead of him] to Esau his brother to the land of Seir in the field of Edom.

5 He commanded them by saying, Thus you will say to my lord, to Esau.

“This is what says your servant Jacob: ‘[With Laban] I have sojourned, [where I have lingered] until now.

6 [There have come to me] oxen and donkeys, and sheep, servants, and slave girls.

[I am sending word] to tell my lord [so as to find favor] in your eyes.’ ”

7 Then returned the servants to Jacob, saying, “We came to your brother—to Esau.

Moreover he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.”

8 [And he was frightened]—[Jacob was scared] exceedingly. Quite anguished was he.

[So he divided] the people [who accompanied him], [as well as the sheep] [and also the cattle] and the camels, into two camps.

9 [And he declared], “[If he should come—] [If Esau draws near—] to a camp—to one of them—and attacks it,

[then it will be] that the camp that remains will escape.”

10 [He then spoke]: [Jacob prayed], “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac,

YHWH, you [said this to me], ‘[You must return] [to your own land], [to your birthplace], and I will do well with you.’

11 [Too small am I] for all of the kindness and all of the trust that you have shown to your servant.

For [with only my staff] did I cross the Jordan River, and now I have become two camps.

12 [So deliver] [me, I pray], from the hand of my brother—from the hand of Esau,

since afraid am I of him, [lest he come] [to strike me down], mother and children.

13 But you have told me, ‘I will surely do good with you,

and will make your seed like the sand of the sea, [end aliyah] that cannot be counted for multitude.’ “

14 He spent time there—he stayed there that night. [Then he took] [from what had come] [into his hand] this offering for Esau his brother:

15 She-goats: two hundred, and he-goats: twenty. Of ewes there were two hundred, and of rams there were twenty.

32:16 [And there were camels] [suckling there young]—[along with their calves]—there were thirty.

Of cows there were forty, of bulls there were ten, she-asses were twenty, and he-asses, ten.

17 [These he gave] into the hand of his servants, herd by herd, [each by itself].

He said to his servants, “Go on [ahead of me]. A space [you must keep] between each herd and the next.”

18 He commanded the first group, by saying: “When [he meets up with you]—Esau my brother—[he will question you], saying:

‘[Whose servants are you], and where are you going, [and to whom belong] these herds in front of you?’

19 You must reply, ‘To your servant Jacob. A gift it is [that has been sent] to my lord—to Esau. And behold, he is here, right behind us.’ ”

20 [And so did he command] also [the second group], [as well as] the third; indeed all those who were waiting behind the herds, and said,

“[In this] manner [you must speak] to Esau when you encounter him.”

21 [You shall say this]: “[Indeed it is true] [that he is here]—your servant Jacob—behind us.”

[For he said to himself], “[I will wipe the wrath from his face] with a gift [that goes on] [ahead of me].

After that [I will show] my face. [Perhaps then] he will lift up my face [*i.e.* forgive me].”

22 So he sent the gifts [ahead of him]. [And thus did he] spend that night in the camp.

Jacob wrestles with God

23 And he got up [during [that very night] [and he took] [his two] wives and his [two handmaids]

and his eleven children. [And he then crossed] at the ford of the Jabbok.

24 [And when he had taken them] [and had them cross] the river, [he brought across] [all that was his].

25 Then remained there, Jacob, alone. And there wrestled [a man there] [with him] until the rising of the dawn.

26 [When the man saw] that [he could not] prevail [against Jacob], he touched [the socket of his thigh],

dislocating the hip-socket of Jacob as he wrestled [with him].

27 [The man said], “Let me go, since *there* arises the dawn.” [Replied Jacob], “I won’t let you leave, until you bless me.”

28 The man then asked Jacob, “[What is your name?]” [And he replied], “Jacob”.

29 [And the man said], “Not as *Jacob* [will you be called]—any longer as your name, but rather as *Israel*,

[since you have struggled] [and been strong against God] and against men, and have prevailed.”

32:30 Then [asked Jacob of him], "Tell me now [your name]."

[And the man replied], "Why is it that you are asking [my name]?" [end aliyah] And he blessed Jacob farewell.

31 [Jacob called out]—[he there proceeded] to give a name to that place: "Peniel" [face of God], [saying "I have seen] God face to face, and yet delivered was my soul."

32 [There rose upon him] the sun, as he was leaving Peniel. He was limping, [because of his hip].

33 [It is because of this] [that they do not eat]—the children of Israel—the sinew [called the sciatic nerve] that is found on the socket of the thigh, up to this very day, [because of the one] who had touched the hip-socket of Jacob in that place, [on the sciatic nerve].

The meeting with Esau

33:1 Then lifted up Jacob [his eyes]. He looked: he saw that Esau was coming. [And with him] there were four hundred men. He divided the children among Leah and Rachel and among the two handmaids.

2 [And he placed] [the two handmaids] and their children in front, Leah and her children behind them, Rachel and Joseph last.

3 Jacob went on before them. He bowed to the ground seven times, [until he came up] to his brother.

4 Then ran Esau [up to meet them] and embraced him, flung himself on his shoulder, and kissed him. And they wept.

5 [He looked up]—[Esau lifted his eyes]—[and he saw] the women and children, and he asked, "Who are these to you?"

[Jacob answered him], "[The children] [end aliyah] with whom graced by God was your servant."

6 [And they came over]—[the two handmaids]—they and their children, and bowed down.

7 [Then there came over] [also Leah] and her children, and bowed down.

[And after that] also [Joseph came up], along with Rachel, and they bowed down.

8 [And Esau asked], "What [indeed to you] is all the camp I see here, that I have met?"

[Jacob answered him], "It is to find favor in the eyes of my lord."

9 And said Esau, to me there is plenty. [My brother!] Let it remain yours—[that which is yours].

10 [Then spoke] [Jacob by saying], "[Please, no!] [If I pray] [I have found] favor [in your eyes], then do take my gift from my hand.

Because [after all], [having now] [seen your face], [it is like seeing] the face of God—[you have received me so kindly].

33:11 Take [my welcoming gift] that was brought to you, since graced was I by God: I have it all.
[And so Jacob pressed him], and Esau accepted.

Jacob leaves Esau

12 Esau said, “[Let’s break camp] [and move on]. Let me go [alongside you].”
13 Jacob [replied to him], “My lord, you know that the children are weak. The sheep and oxen that are nursing are in my care. [If they are driven hard] [for even one] day, they will die—all the sheep.
14 Go ahead—I pray, my lord—go ahead of your servant. [As for me], I will lead [my group slowly], at the pace of the herd [that goes before me] and at the pace of the children, [until such time] as I come to my lord at Seir.”
15 [And replied] Esau, “[Let me leave] [some people with you], from those accompanying me. Jacob said, “To what purpose? [Let me just find favor] in the eyes of my lord.”
16 [He began his return]: on [that day] [Esau started back], on his journey to Seir.
17 Now Jacob went to Sukkot, where he built himself a house, [and for his livestock], he made booths. [Because of this], he called the name of the place, “Sukkot” (booths or shelters).

Jacob arrives at Shechem

18 [Then he came]—Jacob arrived safely—at the city of Shechem (which is found in the land of Canaan), when he was coming to Padan Aram, and he encamped facing the city.
19 [He then purchased] the portion [of the field] of which he pitched there his tent, from the hand of the sons of Chamor, from the chief of Shechem, for a hundred [pieces of silver].
20 [He built there] an altar, [and proclaimed upon it], [end aliyah] “El, the God of Israel.”

↑ Stone Edition Tanach

The rape of Dinah

34:1 There went out Dinah, [daughter of Leah], whom she had borne to Jacob, to see the daughters of the land.
2 She was seen by Shechem, [son of Chamor] the Hivite, the chief of the land. And [he took her] and lay with her, by force.
3 [Strongly attached] was his soul to Dinah, [daughter of Jacob]. [He fell in love] [with the girl], and he spoke to the heart of the girl.

34:4 [Then spoke] Shechem to Chamor his father, as follows: [Take for me] this young girl, for a wife.

5 Now Jacob heard that [she had been defiled]—Dinah his daughter, [and his sons] were with his cattle in the field.

So Jacob kept silent, [until they came home].

A matrimonial alliance with the Shechemites

6 [And there went out] Chamor, father of Shechem, to Jacob, to speak with him.

7 And the sons of Jacob [came back from] the field, when they heard. Distressed were the men, angry they were, exceedingly, since [a disgraceful thing] he had done in Israel, to sleep with a daughter of Jacob! [Such a thing] ought not to be done.

8 Then spoke Chamor with them, like this: “[Shechem, my son]—[deeply attached] is his soul for your daughter.

[Give her]—[I beg you] [to give her] [to him] as a wife.

9 Intermarry with us. Your daughters—[give to us], [and *our* daughters], take for yourselves.

10 Among us you should dwell; the land will be open before you. Settle down [and move about in it], and take possessions in it.

11 [Then said] Shechem to Dinah’s father and to her brothers, “[Let me find favor] in your eyes, and whatsoever you should ask of me, I will give it.”

12 If great [to me] indeed, is the bride-price and the marriage-gift, [I will give to you] whatever you ask of me.

[end aliyah] Just give me the girl as a wife.”

13 When they replied—the sons of Jacob—to Shechem [and to] [Chamor his father], with deceit they did speak, because he had defiled her—Dinah their sister.

14 They said [this to them]: “We are not able to do this thing you ask, to give our sister to a man who has a foreskin.

For a disgrace that would be to us.

15 [Only in this way] will we consent to you: if [you be] [like us] and circumsize those among you—every male.

16 [Then we will give] our daughters [to you], [and *your* daughters] [we will take for ourselves].

We will dwell among you, and we will become a single people.

17 [But if you will not] [hearken to what] we ask you—to be circumsized, we will take our daughters, and go.”

34:18 Now good were these words, in the eyes of Chamor, and in the eyes of Shechem, son of Chamor.

19 [He did not hesitate]—the youth—to do this thing, since he desired Jacob's daughter.

He was [the most respected person] in the whole house of his father.

20 So came Chamor [and Shechem his son] to the gate of the city, [and they spoke] to the people of their city, as follows:

21 “As for these people: [peaceably are they] disposed [toward us]. They will live on the land [and move about] in it, [for the land] is surely spacious [enough for them]. Their daughters [we will take for ourselves] as wives, [and *our* daughters] we will give to them.

22 [But only *this* way] will they [comply with us]—the men—and dwell [with us], to become kindred, one people, that circumsized [be those among us]—[all the men], just as *they* are circumsized.

23 Their cattle, their property, and all their animals—will they not become ours?

[If only] we comply [with them], that they may settle among us.”

24 So they hearkened to Chamor and to Shechem, his son—[all who came out] to the gate of the city.

They were circumsized—all the males—[all who came out] to the gate of the city.

The treacherous revenge of Simion and Levi

25 [And it happened] on the third day, when the men [were still in pain], [they took up arms]—[two of Jacob's sons], Simeon and Levi, brothers of Dinah, each took his sword, they came upon the city unsuspected, and killed all the males.

26 Chamor and Shechem his son—they slew by the sword. [They then took] [their sister Dinah] from the house of Shechem and went off.

27 The other sons [of Jacob] [came upon] the bodies of the slain, and they plundered the city which had defiled their sister.

28 The sheep, the cattle, and the donkeys, [and whatever else] [that was in the city] and what was in the field, they seized.

29 All their riches, their children, and their wives, they took as captive and plundered, even all that was in the houses.

30 And said Jacob to Simeon [and to Levi], “You have made [trouble for me], making me odious [to those who live] in the land—to the Canaanites and to the Perizites.

[My men are few] in number. [If they band together] against me and attack me, I'll be destroyed, myself and my household.

31 [To which they replied], “[Like a prostitute] [end aliyah] [can he] [treat our sister]?”

Jacob at Bethel

35:1 Then said *Elohim* to Jacob, “[Move on, now]. Go up to Beth El, and live there.

Build there an altar to the God who appeared to you, [when you were fleeing] from the face of Esau your brother.”

2 [And said] Jacob to his household, and to everyone who was with him,

“[You must put away] the gods—the alien gods that are [in your midst]. Purify yourselves, and change your clothes.

3 We’ll set out and go up to Beth El.

I will make there an altar [to the God] Who answered me on the day [of my distress], and Who has [been with me] on the way that I have gone.”

4 So they gave to Jacob [these things]: all the alien gods that were [in their hand], even the rings that were in their ears.

He buried them—[Jacob stashed them] under the terebinth, that is near Shechem.

5 [Then they moved on], [and their fell] a terror [from *Elohim*]

on the towns that were all around them, so they did not pursue or run after the children of Jacob.

6 Thus came Jacob [to the town of Luz], which is in the land of Canaan (that is, to Beth El), he himself and all the people that were with him.

7 And he built there an altar, and he called the place “El Beth El”,

because [it was in that place] [God was revealed] to him—*HaElohim*—when he was fleeing from his brother.

8 [Then died there] Deborah, the nurse of Rebecca, [and she was buried] below Beth El, under the oak tree.

[They called its name] “Alon Bakhuth” (“the Oak of Weeping”).

9 Then appeared *Elohim* to Jacob a further time, when he was coming from Padam Aram, and God blessed him.

10 God said to him—*Elohim*, “Your name is Jacob, [but it will not be called]—your name any longer—Jacob, but rather will *Israel* be your name.” Thus God called his name, Israel.

11 [And God said this] to him—*Elohim*—“[I am] *El Shaddai*. Be fruitful and multiply.

[Not just one nation], but a community of nations, will come forth from you. Even kings, from your loins will be born.

12 [Also the land]—[the land that I gave] to Abraham and to Isaac—to you I will give it, and to your seed after you, I will give this land.”

13 God went up from beside him—*Elohim* ascended, [there in the place] that God had spoken to him.

35:14 There he set up—[Jacob raised up a pillar]—[at the place] where God had spoken to him—a pillar of stone.

[He made a libation] upon it—a drink offering, and poured over it some oil.

15 And called Jacob the name [of that place]—[the place of which] [God had spoken] [to him] there, [where *Elohim* had spoken]: *Beth El*.

The birth of Benjamin and the death of Rachel

16 They moved on from Beth El. There was still a stretch of land, to come to Ephrath, when travailed Rachel in childbirth, and hard was her labor.

17 And when it was at its hardest—her labor,

there spoke [to her] the midwife, [saying: “Do not be afraid], since there will again be for you, a son.”

18 [And so it was], as was departing her soul (for she died), she called out his name, “Ben-oni” (“son of my sorrow”).

Her father called him Benjamin (“son of my right hand”).

19 And so, Rachel died. She was buried on the road to Ephrath, [end aliyah] now called Bethlehem.

20 [And he set up]—[Jacob raised up] a pillar on her grave. [This is in fact] the monument of the tomb of Rachel, to this day.

21 He departed—[Israel went on]. He set up his tent beyond Migdal Eder (“Hard tower”).

22 "תמדרשי" הטעמה [And it was] [when Israel] was dwelling [in that land],

that went off Reuben, [and he lay with] Bilhah, concubine of his father. And Israel heard. Now the number of the sons of Jacob was two and ten.

22alt "פשוטה" הטעמה [And it was] when Israel was dwelling in that land,

that went off Reuben, [and he lay with] Bilhah, concubine of his father.

And Israel heard.

22a Now the number of the sons of Jacob was two and ten.

Note: Verse 22 contains a "Piska Be'emtza Pasuk": a new paragraph in the Torah scroll that begins in the middle of the verse.

There are two versions of the trope, depending on whether the verse is read as one verse or two separate verses.

<https://judaism.stackexchange.com/questions/4904/what-is-the-proper-way-to-read-genesis-3522>

The twelve sons of Jacob

23 The sons of Leah, first-born of Jacob, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar and Zebulun.

24 The sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.

25 The sons of Bilhah, the handmaid of Rachel, were Dan and Naphtali.

26 The sons [of Zilpah], handmaid of Leah, were Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob, that were born to him in Padam Aram.

Isaac's death

35:27 Thus came Jacob to Isaac his father in Mamre, at Kiryath Arba, known also as Hebron, where had sojourned there, Abraham and Isaac.
28 These were the days of Isaac: one hundred years, and eighty years.
29 Then expired Isaac—and he died, and was gathered to his people, being old, and full of days.
They buried him, [end aliyah]—Esau and Jacob, his sons.

Esau's wives and children in Canaan

36:1 [Now these] are the generations of Esau; that is, Edom.
2 [Esau took] for for himself wives from the daughters of Canaan:
Adah, daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah, daughter of Anah, daughter of Tziv'on the Hivite,
3 and Basemath, daughter of Ishmael, sister of Nebayoth.
4 [Adah gave birth]—[Adah in fact bore] to Esau: Eliphaz. And Basemath gave birth to Reuel.
5 Oholibamah gave birth to Yeush, Yalan, and Korach. These are the sons of Esau, who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

Esau's migration

6 And he took—[Esau took all that was his]: [he took all his wives], [his sons], [and his daughters]; all the persons [of his household], his cattle, [and all of his animals], in fact, all of his possessions that he had acquired in the land of Canaan, and he went to a land, [away from the presence] of Jacob his brother.
7 [For they had acquired]—[they had in their possession] too much [for them to settle] together.
The land was not able—the land of their sojourns—to [support them] because of all their livestock,
8 [Then settled] Esau in the hill country of Seir—and Esau became Edom.

Esau's descendants in Seir

9 [Now these] are the generations of Esau, tribal-father of Edom, in the hill country of Seir.
10 These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz, son of Adah wife of Esau, and Reuel, son of Basemath wife of Esau.

36:11 These were the sons of Eliphaz: Teman, Omar, Tzevo & Gatam, and Kenaz.

12 [As for Timna], she became the concubine of Eliphaz, son of Esau, and she bore to Eliphaz: Amalek.
[These, then] were descendants of Adah, wife of Esau.

13 Now these are the sons of Reuel: Nachath and Zerach, Shamah and Mizzah. These were therefore descendants of Basemath, wife of Esau.

14 Now [these are] the sons of Oholibamah, [daughter of Anah], [daughter of Tziv'on], wife of Esau.
She bore to Esau: Yeush, Yalam, and Korach.

The chiefs of Edom

36:15 These are the clans [of the children of Esau]:

the sons of Eliphaz, first-born of Esau, [the Chief] Teman, Chief Omar, Chief Tzevo, Chief Kenaz,

16 [And Chief Korach], Chief Gatam, and Chief Amalek.

[These were in fact] the clans of Eliphaz in the land of Edom, and the descendants of Adah.

17 [Now, these are] the sons of Reuel, son of Esau: Chief Nachath, Chief Zerach, Chief Shamah, and Chief Mizzah.

[These were in fact] the clans of Reuel in the land of Edom. [They were therefore] the sons of Basemath, wife of Esau.

18 [And these are] the sons of Oholibamah, wife of Esau: Chief Yeush, Chief Yalam, and Chief Korach.

[These are therefore] [the chiefs of the clans] of Oholibamah, [daughter of Anah], wife of Esau.

19 [Those are the clans of] [the sons of Esau], and their tribal chiefs: This is Edom.

The descendants of Seir the Horite

20 Now these [are the sons of Seir] the Horite, who were settled in the land: Lotan, Shoval, Tziv'on and Anah,

21 And Dishon and Etzer, and Dishon. [These were in fact] [the chiefs of the clans] [of the Horites], sons of Seir, in the land of Edom.

22 Now the sons of Lotan were Chori and Heman. The sister of Lotan was Timna.

23 These are the sons of Shoval: Alvan and Manachath, and Ebhal, and Shefo, and Onam.

24 These are the sons of Tziv'on: Ayah and Anah.

This [was the Anah] who discovered the water in the wilderness, when he tended the donkeys of Tziv'on, his father.

25 These are the children of Anah: Dishon, and Oholibamah [daughter of Anah].

36:26 These are the sons of Dishon: Chemdan and Eshban, and Yitrān and Kerān.

27 These [are the sons of Etzer]: Bilhan and Zaavan, and Akan.

28 These [are the sons of Dishon]: Utz and Aran.

29 These are the clans of the Horites: Chief Lotān, Chief Shōval, Chief Tziv'on, and Chief Anah,

30 Chief Dishon, Chief Etzer, and Chief Dishan. [These indeed] [were the tribes] [of the Horites] according to their chiefs, in the land of Seir.

The kings of Edom

31 These are the kings who ruled in the land of Edom, before there ruled any king over the children of Israel.

32 There ruled in Edom: Bela, son of Beor. The name of his city was Dinḥava.

33 At the death of Bela, they reigned in his stead: Yovav, son of Zerach, from Botzrah.

34 At the death of Yovav, they reigned in his stead: Chusham, from the land of the Temanites.

35 At the death of Chusham, they reigned in his stead: Ḥadad, [son of Badad],

who defeated Midian [in the field] of Moab. The name of his city was Avith.

36 At the death of Ḥadad they reigned in his stead: Samlah of Masrekah.

37 At the death of Samlah they reigned in his stead: Saul, from Rechovoth-on-the-River.

38 At the death of Saul they reigned in his stead: Baal Chanan, [son of Akhbōr].

39 [At the death] of Baal Chanan, [son of Akhbōr], they reigned in his stead: Ḥadār. The name of his city was Pau.

The name of his wife was Mehertaval, [daughter of Matred], daughter of May Zahav.

More chiefs of Edom

40 [So, to summarize]: [These are the names] of the clans of Esau [according to their families], by their locality, [and by their names].

[the Chief] [named Timna], Chief Alvah, and Chief Yetheth,

41 [And the Chief] Oholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon,

42 [And Chief] Kenaz, Chief Teman, and Chief Mivtzar,

43 Chief Magdiel, and Chief Iram. [These are in sum] the clans [of Edom] [according to their families], in the land of their possession.

[end aliyah] This is Esau, tribal-father of Edom.

Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh or yetiv kadma or pashta geresh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, geresh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi'i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh (<i>or</i> : azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
(Renew our days)	(She weeps bitterly).	(a fire-offering to God)

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalshelet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (viz. cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a distinctive melody—I add extra syllables to fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “*God*” or “*Adonai*”.

Warning on the Hebrew text: The text I use for the English trope system is from Aryeh Kaplan; the Hebrew text I display is from Wikisource. Occasionally (but rarely) a phrase will use different tropes in the two systems.

The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)
Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)
Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)
The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)
JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2nd Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)
Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)
Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series
Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)
The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)
The New King James Bible (1982)